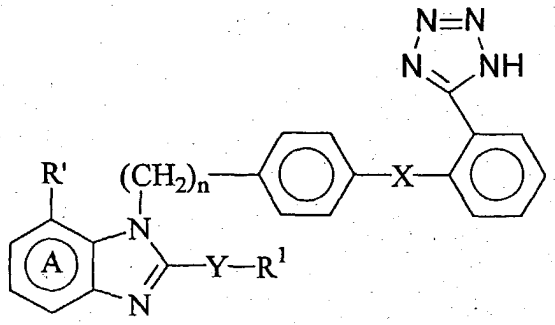
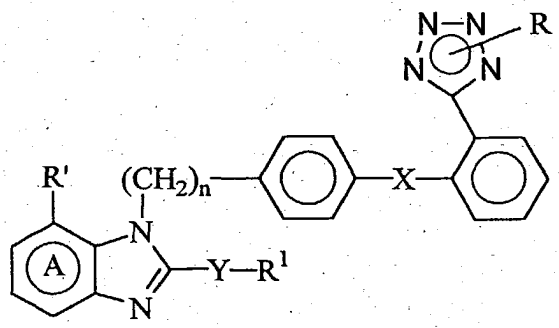
We claim:

1. A method for producing a compound represented by the formula:



(Im)

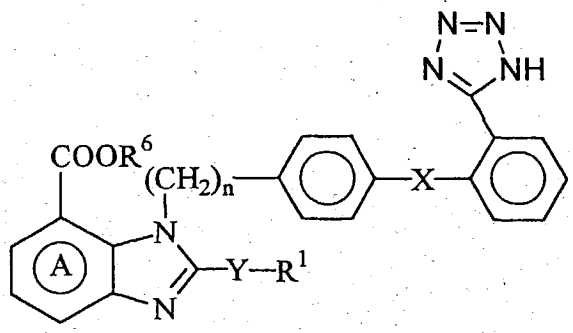
wherein the ring A is a benzene ring which may be substituted in addition to the R' group; R^1 is hydrogen or an optionally substituted hydrocarbon residue; X is a direct bond or a spacer having an atomic length or two or less between the phenylene group and the phenyl group; Y is -O-, -S(O)m- or -N(R^4)- wherein m is an integer of 0, 1 or 2 and R^4 is hydrogen or an optionally substituted alkyl group; R' is carboxyl, an ester thereof, an amide thereof or a group capable of forming an anion or a group convertible thereinto; n is an integer of 1 or 2; or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, which comprises deprotecting a compound represented by the formula:



(II)

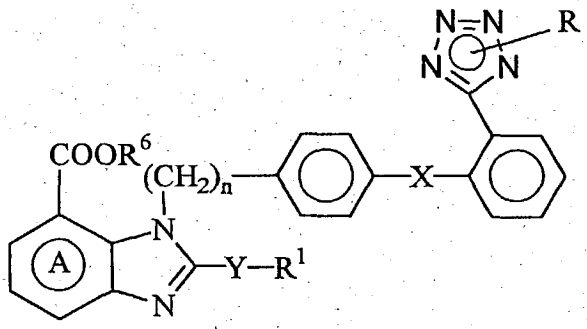
wherein R is triphenylmethyl, 2-tetrahydropyranyl, methoxymethyl or ethoxy methyl, and the other symbols have the same meanings as defined above; or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

2. A method for producing a compound represented by the formula:



(Iq)

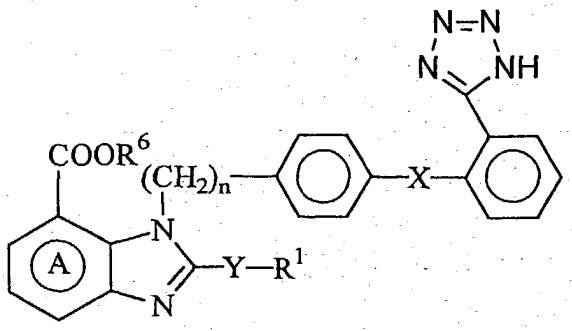
wherein the ring A is a benzene ring which may be substituted in addition to the group of -$COOR^6$ group; R^1 is hydrogen or an optionally substituted hydrocarbon residue; X is a direct bond or a spacer having an atomic length or two or less between the phenylene group and the phenyl group; Y is -O-, -S(O)m- or -$N(R^4)$- wherein m is an integer of 0, 1 or 2 and R^1 is hydrogen or an optionally substituted alkyl group; R^6 is a lower (C_{1-6}) alkyl optionally substituted with lower (C_{2-6}) alkanoyloxy, 1-lower (C_{1-6}) alkoxycarbonyloxy; n is an integer of 1 or 2; or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, which comprises deprotecting a compound represented by the formula:



(Ip)

wherein R is triphenylmethyl, 2-tetrahydropyranyl, methoxymethyl or ethoxy methyl, and the other symbols have the same meanings as defined above; or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

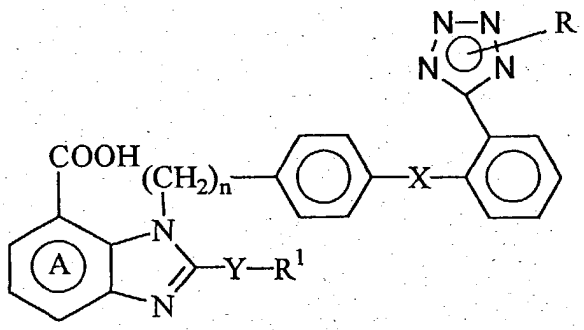
3. A method for producing a compound represented by the formula:



(Iq)

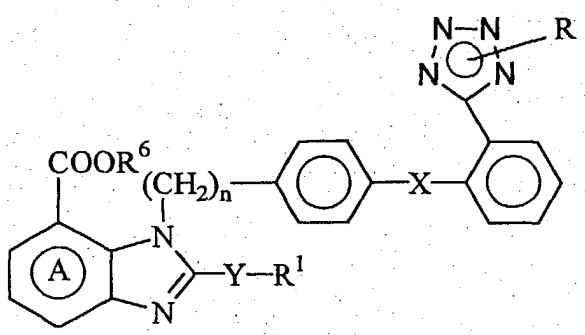
wherein the ring A is a benzene ring which may be substituted in addition to the group of -$COOR^6$ group; R^1 is hydrogen or an optionally substituted hydrocarbon residue; X is a direct bond or a spacer having an atomic length or two or less between the phenylene group and the phenyl group; Y is -O-, -S(O)m- or -$N(R^4)$- wherein m is an integer of 0, 1 or 2 and R^4 is hydrogen or an optionally substituted alkyl group; R^6 is a lower (C_{1-6}) alkyl optionally substituted with lower (C_{2-6}) alkanoyloxy, 1-lower (C_{1-6}) alkoxycarbonyloxy; n is an integer of 1 or 2; or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, which comprises;

(i) reacting a compound represented by the formula:



(Io)

wherein R is triphenylmethyl, 2-tetrahydropyranyl, methoxymethyl or ethoxy methyl, and the other symbols have the same meanings as defined above, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof; with an alkylating agent to give a compound represented by the formula:

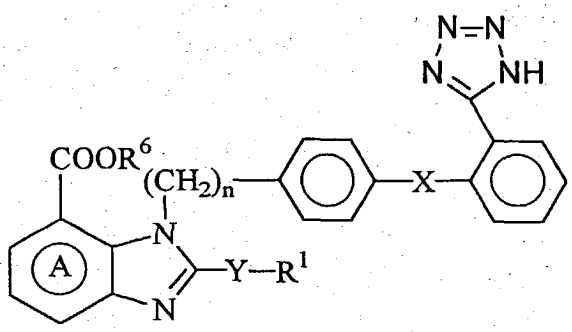


(Ip)

wherein each symbol has the same meaning as defined above; or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof; and then,

(ii) deprotecting the compound (Ip) or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

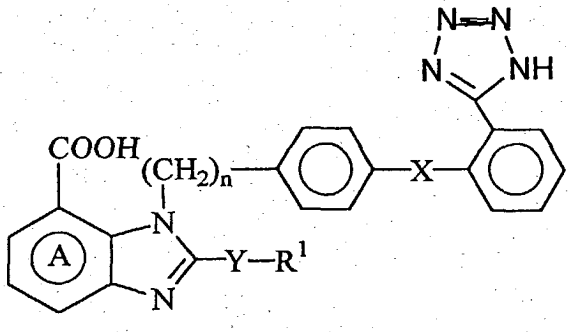
4. A method for producing a compound represented by the formula:



(Iq)

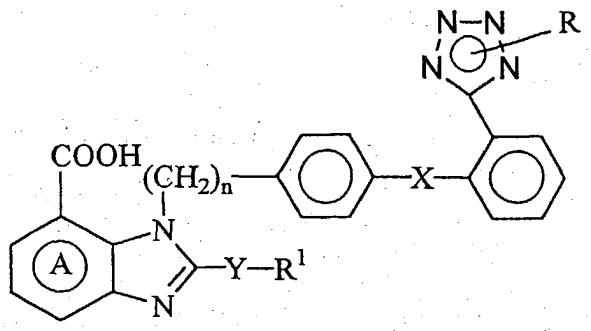
wherein the ring A is a benzene ring which may be substituted in addition to the group of -$COOR^6$ group; R^1 is hydrogen or an optionally substituted hydrocarbon residue; X is a direct bond or a spacer having an atomic length or two or less between the phenylene group and the phenyl group; Y is -O-, -S(O)m- or -$N(R^4)$- wherein m is an integer of 0, 1 or 2 and R^4 is hydrogen or an optionally substituted alkyl group; R^6 is a lower (C_{1-6}) alkyl optionally substituted with lower (C_{2-6}) alkanoyloxy, 1-lower (C_{1-6}) alkoxycarbonyloxy; n is an integer of 1 or 2; or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, which comprises;

(i) reacting a compound represented by the formula:



(In)

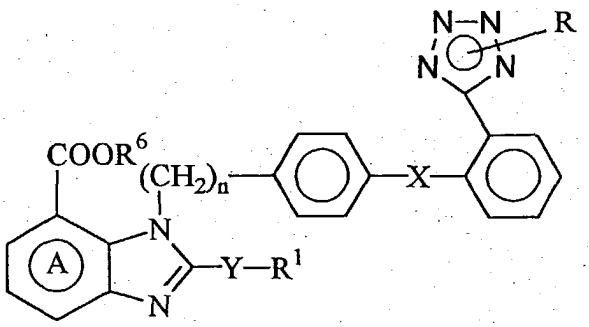
wherein each symbol has the same meaning as defined above, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof with an alkylating agent to give a compound represented by the formula:



(Io)

wherein R is triphenylmethyl, 2-tetrahydropyranyl, methoxymethyl or ethoxy methyl, and the other symbols have the same meanings as defined above, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof;

(ii) reacting the compound (Io) or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof with an alkylating agent to give a compound represented by the formula:



(Ip)

wherein each symbol has the same meaning as defined above; or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof; and then,

(iii) deprotecting the compound (Ip) or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

5. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein R^1 is an optionally substituted alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, or aralkyl group.

6. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein R^1 is an alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, or cycloalkyl group, which may be substituted with hydroxyl, an optionally substituted amino group, halogen or a lower (C_{1-4}) alkoxy group.

7. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein R^1 is a lower (C_{1-5}) alkyl or lower (C_{2-5}) alkenyl group optionally substituted with hydroxyl, an amino group, halogen or a lower (C_{1-4}) alkoxy group.

8. A method according to claim 6, wherein the alkyl is a lower alkyl group having 1 to about 8 carbon atoms, which may be straight or branched.

9. A method according to claim 8, wherein the lower alkyl group is unsubstituted or substituted with hydroxyl, an optionally substituted amino group, halogen or a lower (C_{1-4}) alkoxy group.

10. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein R^1 is a lower alkyl group having 1 to about 8 carbon atoms.

11. A method according to claim 5, wherein the aryl group is phenyl which may be substituted with halogen, nitro, lower (C_{1-4}) alkoxy, or lower (C_{1-4}) alkyl.

12. A method according to claim 5, wherein the aralkyl group is phenyl-lower (C_{1-4}) alkyl which may be substituted with halogen, nitro, lower (C_{1-4}) alkoxy, or lower (C_{1-4}) alkyl.

13. A method according to claim 1, wherein R' is a group having the formula: -CO-D' wherein D' is hydroxyl, optionally substituted amino or optionally substituted alkoxy.

14. A method according to claim 1, wherein R' is a group having the formula: -CO-D' wherein D' is hydroxyl or optionally substituted alkoxy.

15. A method according to claim 14, wherein D' is hydroxyl, a lower (C_{1-4}) alkoxy group optionally substituted with hydroxyl, optionally substituted amino, halogen, lower (C_{1-5}) alkoxy, lower (C_{1-4}) alkylthio or optionally substituted dioxolenyl on the alkyl moiety, or a group having the formula: $-OCH(R^7)OCOR^8$ wherein R^7 is hydrogen, straight or branched lower alkyl having 1 to 6 carbon atoms, or cycloalkyl having 5 to 7 carbon atoms and R^8 is straight or branched lower alkyl having 1 to 6 carbon atoms, straight or branched lower alkenyl having 2 to about 8 carbon atoms, cycloalkyl having 5 to 7 carbon atoms, lower (C_{1-3}) alkyl which is substituted with optionally substituted aryl or cycloalkyl having 5 to 7 carbon atoms, lower (C_{2-3}) alkenyl which is substituted with optionally substituted aryl or cycloalkyl having 5 to 7 carbon atoms, optionally substituted aryl, straight or branched lower

alkoxy having 1 to 6 carbon atoms, straight or branched lower alkenyloxy having 2 to about 8 carbon atoms, cycloalkyloxy having 5 to 7 carbon atoms, lower (C_{1-3}) alkoxy which is substituted with optionally substituted aryl or cycloalkyl having 5 to 7 carbon atoms, lower (C_{2-3}) alkenyloxy which is substituted with optionally substituted aryl or cycloalkyl having 5 to 7 carbon atoms, or optionally substituted aryloxy.

16. A method according to claim 1, wherein R' is a group capable of forming an anion or convertible thereinto either chemically or under biological and/or physiological conditions.

17. A method according to claim 1, wherein R' is a group capable of forming the residue: -COO- or convertible thereinto.

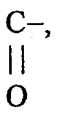
18. A method according to claim 14, wherein D' is hydroxyl, a lower (C_{1-6}) alkoxy group optionally substituted with hydroxyl, lower (C_{1-6}) alkoxy or optionally substituted dioxolenyl on the alkyl moiety, a lower (C_{2-3}) alkenyloxy optionally substituted with optionally substituted aryl on the alkenyl moiety, or a group having the formula: $-OCH(R^7)OCOR^6$ wherein R^7 is hydrogen, or straight or branched lower alkyl having 1 to 6 carbon atoms and R^6 is straight or branched lower alkyl having 1 to 6 carbon atoms, cycloalkyl having 5 to 7 carbon atoms, lower (C_{1-3}) alkyl which is substituted with optionally substituted aryl or cycloalkyl having 5 to 7 carbon atoms, optionally substituted aryl, straight or branched lower alkoxy having 1 to 6 carbon atoms, cycloalkyloxy having 5 to 7 carbon atoms, lower (C_{1-3}) alkoxy which is substituted with optionally substituted aryl or cycloalkyl having 5 to 7 carbon atoms, or optionally substituted aryloxy.

19. A method according to claim 1, wherein R' is carboxyl or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or anion thereof.

20. A method according to claim 1, wherein R' is a group having the formula: $-CO-OCH(R^7)OCOR^8$ wherein R^7 is hydrogen or straight or branched lower alkyl having 1 to 6 carbon atoms and R^3 is straight branched lower alkyl having 1 to 6 carbon atoms, cycloalkyl having 5 to 7 carbon atoms, optionally substituted phenyl, straight or branched lower alkoxy having 1 to 6 carbon atoms or cycloalkyloxy having 5 to 7 carbon atoms.

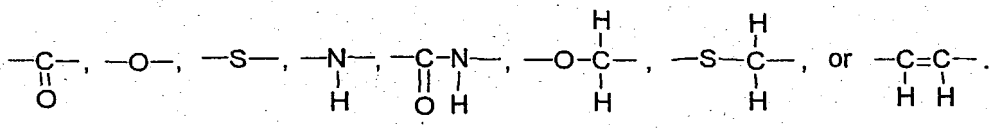
21. A method according to claim 1, wherein R' is a tetrazolyl group optionally protected with optionally substituted lower alkyl or acyl, trifluoromethanesulfonic amide, phosphoric acid or sulfonic acid.

22. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the ring A is a benzene ring which may contain, in addition to the R' group, a substituent being selected from the group consisting of halogen nitro, cyano, optionally substituted amino, a group having the formula: -W-R'^3

wherein W is a chemical bond, -O-, -S-, or  , and R'^3 is hydrogen or an optionally substituted lower alkyl group, a group having the formula: $-(CH_2)_m$-CO-D wherein D is hydrogen, hydroxyl, optionally substituted amino, or optionally substituted alkoxy, and p is 0 or 1, tetrazolyl optionally protected with an optionally substituted lower alkyl group or an acyl group, trifluoromethanesulfonic amide, phosphoric acid, or sulfonic acid.

23. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the ring A is a benzene ring which contains no substitution in addition to the R' group.

24. A method according to anyone of claims 1 to 4, wherein X is a chemical bond, lower (C_{1-4}) alkylene,



25. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein X is a chemical bond between the phenylene group and the phenyl group.

26. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein Y is -O-, $-SO_m$- wherein m is 0, 1, or 2, or $-N(R^4)$- wherein R^4 is hydrogen or an optionally substituted lower (C_{1-4}) alkyl group.

27. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein Y—R^1 is -N(R^4)-R^1 wherein R^1 and R^4 are taken together with the N atom attached thereto to form a heterocyclic ring.

28. A method according to claim 1, wherein the deprotecting reaction is conducted in an aqueous alcohol containing about 0.5N to 2N hydrochloric acid or acetic acid.

29. A method according to claim 3 or 4, wherein the alkylating reaction is conducted in the presence of a base.

30. A method according to any one of claims 2 to 4, wherein the deprotecting reaction is conducted under acid condition.

31. A method according to claim 3 or 4, wherein the alkylating agent is halides.

32. A method according to claim 4, wherein the alkylating agent used in the reaction (i) of compound (In) with alkylating agent, is selected from triphenylmethyl chloride and methoxy methyl chloride.

33. A method according to claim 3 or 4, wherein the alkylating agent used in the reaction of compound (Io) with alkylating agent, is selected from cyclohexyl 1-iodoethyl carbonate, ethyl 1-iodoethyl carbonate, and pivaloyloxymethyl iodide.

34. A method for producing 1-(cyclohexyloxycarbonyloxy)ethyl 2-ethoxy-1-[[2'-(1H-tetrazol-t-yl)biphenyl-4-yl]methyl]benzimidazole-7-carboxylate or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, which comprises deprotecting 1-(cyclohexyloxycarbonyloxy)ethyl 2-ethoxy-1-[[2'-(N-triphenylmethyltetrazol-5-yl)biphenyl-4-yl]methyl]benzimidazole-7-carboxylate or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

35. A method for producing 1-(cyclohexyloxycarbonyloxy)ethyl 2-ethoxy-1-[[2'-(1H-tetrazol-5-yl)biphenyl-4-yl]methyl]benzimidazole-7-carboxylate or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, which comprises reacting 2-ethoxy-1-[[2'-(N-triphenylmethyltetrazol-5-yl)biphenyl-4-yl]methyl]benzimidazole-7-carboxylic acid or a

pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof with an alkylating agent, and then subjecting the resulting compound to deprotecting reaction of the tetrazole group.

36. A method for producing 1-(cyclohexyloxycarbonyloxy)ethyl 2-ethoxy-1-[[2'-(1H-tetrazol-5-yl)biphenyl-4-yl]methyl]benzimidazole-7-carboxylate or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, which comprises (i) reacting 2-ethoxy-[[2'-(1H-tetrazol-5-yl)biphenyl-4-yl]methyl]benzimidazole-7-carboxylic acid or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof with an alkylating agent to give 2-ethoxy-1-[[2'-N-triphenylmethyltetrazol-5-yl)biphenyl-4-yl]methyl]benzimidazole-7-carboxylic acid or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, (ii) reacting the resulting compound with an alkylating agent, and then (iii) subjecting the resulting compound to deprotecting reaction of the tetrazole group.